

SECRET

LSX 296 *

~~114~~

Memo No. 375

28 May 1946

TO : SAINT Washington
FROM : SAINT Vienna (DD 110) DD 110
SUBJECT: Erich WENDER

*Cover sheet w/d & returned
to Registry for record,
E.M.W.*

1. Reference is made to your memorandum X4623 dated 17 May 1946.

2. Subject was interrogated on the points raised in the above-mentioned reference. His answers are noted below.

3. Answers to paragraph 2 of your memorandum: There is basically no contradiction in WENDER's and GROSS's assertions. WENDER has always maintained that GROSS knew SPRINGMAN since their primary school days, and does not contradict that he met GROSS for the first time at a place which he does not remember. WENDER simply asserts that SPRINGMAN and he recruited GROSS for work for the Joint--meaning that until a certain moment GROSS was not aware of the courier service WENDER performed from Istanbul to SPRINGMAN in Budapest. After GROSS had changed gold napoleons for WENDER or for SPRINGMAN many times, he was finally told where the money came from and what was to be done with it. The other assertions by GROSS WENDER simply shrugs off as lies by GROSS, which your memorandum also takes in account.

4. Answers to paragraph 3: It would have been difficult for SPRINGMAN to ask GROSS to take letters to Istanbul, as the actual letters came from the WENIA group in Istanbul, and the answers were collected by the same couriers who delivered them. As for WENDER's being stuck in Istanbul: he always managed to come back when he wanted, thanks to Major BAGEL's help and the excellent papers he had in his possession. Concerning the introductions of GROSS to a certain number of people in Istanbul, WENDER remarks that Pera, the European part of Istanbul, is very small and that all Europeans met in a small number of places. All the Viennese met at the Taksim Bar, which was run by two Jews, VOGL and VIKTOR. Thus, it is not astonishing that GROSS, who wanted to meet Jewish people, was introduced to VOGL and VIKTOR, to Hasan MASARYK (a member of the Austrian Liberation movement), and NEUFELD (whom WENDER remembers under the name of SZEGELY, a violinist and orchestra leader). All the persons mentioned are Jews. Teddy BAUMANN is, according to WENDER, a friend of GROSS and not of his. WENDER would not be astonished if BAUMANN were a DA, but then GROSS should know about it too as he (GROSS) was an agent of the Hungarians and the Germans. That VOGL and VIKTOR were alleged agents of AST III F, Vienna, does not mean that WENDER knew more about GIS activities in Istanbul than he has already told us, nor is it sufficient to term some man "an alleged agent", some other "a reported agent", a third "a shady character" to imply that WENDER had introduced GROSS to GIS agents.

SECRET

*corrected in
* per LSX A 6*

SECRET

- 2 -

5. Answers to paragraph 4: That GROSS does not mention in his interrogation any activities of WENDER is as yet no proof of WENDER's not working with the Jewish Agency people. We checked with the Jewish Agency who confirmed WENDER's story.

6. Answers to paragraph 5: It is perfectly true that WENDER introduced GROSS to AZAR, but this is no point in WENDER's disfavor, we think. As for the leaden tube: that was a sort of concentrate which the Polish consul asked WENDER to deliver to KARJIBOWSKY. Concerning the 500 Turkish pounds, WENDER explains that ROMAN wanted to send this money to KARJIBOWSKY in Budapest, and as he had no pengoe, he gave WENDER 500 Turkish pounds for which WENDER was to give KARJIBOWSKY the counter value in pengoe. WENDER asserts that there was no harm in these things. As a matter of fact, he delivered many sums to different people in Budapest--once a large sum from ROMAN to a Polish Catholic priest in Budapest, a few times equally large sums to a Polish camp in Hungary, and once he was given a kitchen knife with a hollow wooden handle, in which a hundred dollar bill was hidden, which he was to deliver to some Poles in Budapest whom ROMAN wanted to support. The only reason WENDER did not mention this in his interrogation is that it had nothing to do with his story of working for the Joint, the British, or the GIS, which is what interrogator was interested in. L 7111

7. Answers to paragraph 6: The different stories on who cheated whom on the commissions is none too clear. It will be solved in the near future when we personally interrogate WEININGER, who lives in Vienna under his real name of Joseph DURST and who is now working for British Intelligence. The different accusations of GROSS against WENDER and WEININGER are just so many accusations between not too honest people, who were vying for the favors of the British, the Jewish Agency and the profits derived from contacts with these bodies. As for the interventions of Count MAROGNA-REDWITZ in these money matters, we personally doubt very much whether MAROGNA was ever consulted. Concerning the role of Baron von MANTEUFFEL-SZOEGE, we can only assert that the latter never mentioned these matters in the many interrogations carried out by this office. MAROGNA was killed by the Gestapo and von MANTEUFFEL is now free so the exact truth cannot be ascertained.

8. Answers to paragraph 7: WENDER asserts that it was not he who introduced KOVACS to GROSS, but that it was GROSS, who knew KOVACS from Budapest, who introduced WENDER to KOVACS. WENDER goes as far as admitting that he knew KLATT very well from Budapest, and that while KLATT was in Sofia, he sometimes gave WENDER a number of reports with which to pad his (WENDER's) reports to BAGEL. WENDER pointed out to KLATT that it was in KLATT's interest to give him these reports as they all went to the same Stelle, and that two practically similar reports would then increase the reliability of KLATT's reports.

SECRET

SECRET

- 3 -

9. Answer to paragraph 10: "This is an absolute from GROSS."

10. It is possible that BAGEL had mentioned POPESCU (WENDER) as a contact to the Axis Armistice Commissions for trade in the eastern Mediterranean, but WENDER does not know anything about it.

11. Conclusions by case officer: It should be borne in mind that interrogation of WENDER was carried out under the most adverse conditions, on a man undernourished and thoroughly discouraged, who could have left out certain facts, but it is our opinion that WENDER basically told the truth. That GROSS betrayed the group to the Gestapo is not only WENDER's opinion, but that of a number of other sources consulted by us. WENDER certainly is not the snow-white angel he occasionally pictures himself to be, but his Zionist activities are thought to be honest. As for his black market activities, this is so current right here in Vienna that an honest businessman is as rare as snow in a very hot place. That he is willing to discuss his affairs with GROSS can be explained that once he had let GROSS into the courier business and had introduced him to everyone, he saw no reason to withhold his work. It is to be noted, however, that GROSS does not mention the real DA activities of Subject, proof that WENDER could be secure when he wanted to, unless you did not mention it in your memorandum.

12. We do not doubt in the least that WENDER is a black marketeer and a professional agent, but just these "qualities" allow him to frequent certain circles which will give us intelligence necessitated in Project SYMPHONY. We are controlling this agent accordingly.

cc: Salzburg

SECRET